

THE · BAHAI · REVELATION
AND · RECONSTRUCTION
BY · CHARLES · MASON · REMEY

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The Bahai Revelation and Reconstruction



The Bahai Revelation and Reconstruction

A general brief treatise upon the history and the spiritual, social and economic principles of this religious movement, with special regard to the application of these principles to, and their influence on, the coming peace of nations and the tranquillity and welfare of humanity

By
CHARLES MASON REMEY
1919

Note.

This book is compiled from previously approved and published Bahai writings and teachings, of which it is a synthesis.

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OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR OF
THIS BOOK.

"The Bahai Movement."

"Observations of a Bahai Traveler."

"Bahai Teaching."

"Constructive Principles of the Bahai Movement."

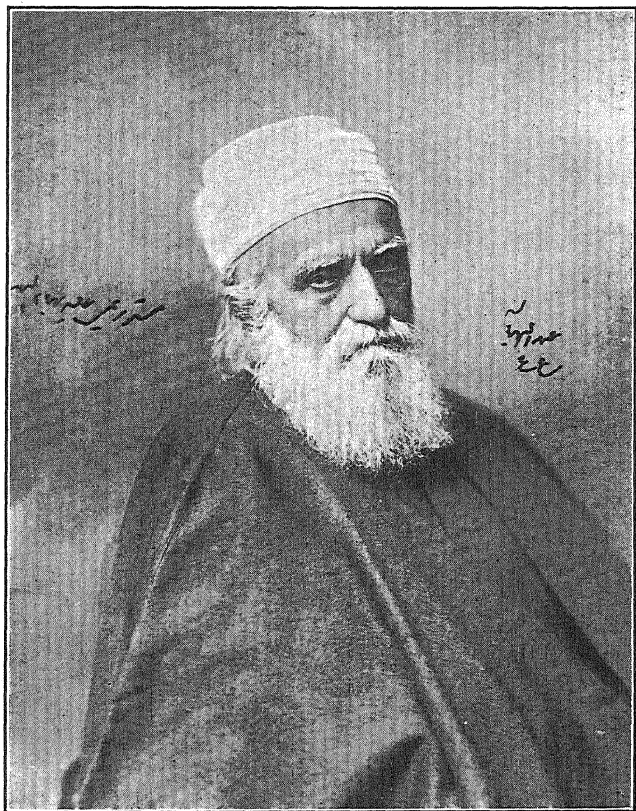
"The Mashrak-el-Azkar (Bahai Temple)."

"Through Warring Countries to the Mountain
of God."

"The Peace of the World."

DEDICATION.

To the ever-increasing number of men and women who are serving humanity, desiring to alleviate its suffering, this booklet is offered with the assurance that in the religion of which it treats is to be found the solution of the problems of the day.



ABDUL BAHÁ

PREFACE.

PREFACE.

Paramount in the public mind at the present time is the all-absorbing plan for the religious, social and economic reconstruction of the world and the arranging of a lasting peace between the nations. The leaders of thought now most prominent before the world are advocating many principles of reconstruction and world peace which are parallel with those held by the adherents of the Bahai Movement and for which this cause has been paving the way for the past seventy-five years; therefore, now, a volume stating briefly the Bahai teaching upon these subjects should be well received by the thinking, reading public.

To students of the Bahai religious teaching the facts mentioned, and the religious philosophy discussed in this booklet will be quite familiar, since this is but a brief resumé of the data and thought found in a fuller and a more expanded form in the standard works of this teaching. To those who are not familiar with the spirit of the Bahai Religion and its philosophy, it is the hope of the author that this abridged exposition of these teachings may lead them to a closer study of the subject.

C. M. R.,
Washington, D. C.,
December 18, 1918.

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“The Cause of Baha’o’llah is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same temple and the same foundation. In the coming of Christ the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha’o’llah have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.”

Abdul Baha.

**THE BAHAI REVELATION AND RECON-
STRUCTION.**

THE BAHAI REVELATION AND RECONSTRUCTION.

PEACE IDEALS.

The ideals of world peace and the brotherhood of mankind have been making rapid progress in the thought of the world during the past two or three decades. Prior to the recent war in Europe these ideals were held for the most part by extreme idealists, people who were regarded by many as visionary and utopian to the point of impracticability, but now that the war is over the need for the realization of these international ideals of co-operation and interdependence between the various peoples, nations and races is being realized on all sides and the world is accepting these ideals in the practical spirit of wanting to apply them to its international needs. People in general are already anticipating a federation of the nations, which will introduce a new international system of relations and conduce towards a civilization in which the energies of men and women will no longer be consumed by national rivalries, inharmonious contests and wars, but these energies will be turned into constructive channels for the improvement and welfare of the human race. The soul of the

world of humanity is only now beginning to awaken to the fact that the real heritage of humanity is just ahead; that we stand at the threshold of the new day of the golden age of universal civilization, progress and culture of which Christ and the Prophets testified, for the reality of which They suffered and shed Their blood, and for which mankind has hoped and prayed for centuries—that this new kingdom might “come on earth as it is in heaven.”

In these latter days of the year 1918 one can scarcely scan a newspaper or a current magazine without seeing articles which testify that the thought of the public is not only occupied with many movements for general world betterment, but thousands of people are giving their time and devoting their energies to the practical service of mankind along various lines of reconstruction of human institutions, affairs and relations calculated to meet the new present day needs of humanity, preparing the way for greater reforms and institutions to come in the near future.

THE BAHAI RELIGION.

There is, at the present time, a philosophy, a religious teaching, the followers of which are striving to make this world a more fit place in which to live. This religious teaching is known

as the Bahai Religious Movement. The object of this movement is to further the spirit of real brotherhood between the peoples of the different religions and races, Oriental and Occidental, forming a common ground for amicable international relations and the establishment of a universal religion which will be the foundation of inter-religious, inter-racial and inter-national brotherhood and peace. The doctrines and practices of this religion offer to mankind a practical basis of unity, one which is in direct line with the great world needs of this age. It is paving the way spiritually for the great universal civilization which will evolve as people of all religions, races and nations unite both spiritually and materially into one great world people.

THE BAB.

Mirza Ali Mohammed, the first teacher of the Bahai Cause, was known as The Bab, which is the Persian and the Arabic word for door or gate. His teaching began with the declaration of His mission to eighteen chosen disciples who were gathered together in the city of Shiraz in southern Persia on the twenty-third day of May, 1844. To these spiritually alive and prepared souls The Bab declared His mission as forerunner of a great world teacher, One Whom He referred to as "He Whom God Shall Manifest,

the great divine teacher who would shortly appear with manifest signs of spiritual power and through whom the Divine Covenant would be fulfilled and the religious unity of the world would be accomplished.

The Bab, then a youth of but nineteen years, through spiritual wisdom and through purity of purpose and soul, drew unto Himself many followers, who in turn arose to promulgate His simple doctrines, and their fervor within a very short time became the means of assembling a large following. Immediately the movement met with great opposition upon the part of the Persian clergy, and at their instigation The Bab was placed under military surveillance. Notwithstanding this trouble He continued His teaching and exhorted the people through purity of living to make ready and to fit themselves for the coming of the Promised One who was shortly to appear.

Thus passed the first two years of The Bab's ministry. His cause had then so increased in influence that the Moslem clergy, fearful of the loss of their hold over the people, caused The Bab to be seized and cast into prison; nevertheless during His imprisonment He continued His teaching through letters and epistles, which were secretly conveyed to His followers throughout the country. After four years of confinement

The Bab, upon the charge of heresy, was condemned to death, and on July 9, 1850, in the city of Tabriz in northwestern Persia, He suffered martyrdom together with one of His devoted followers.

The Bab arose with steadfastness and power to herald the coming of the Lord of the Ages. The institutions which He had established were therefore temporary, being destined to bridge over the time until the coming of the great teacher who would establish a universal cause. The Bab gave very definite instructions to His followers that they, upon the appearance of the one promised, should turn implicitly to that one, following His teachings and instructions, in which would be a spiritual power that would evolve and grow until it filled the world, unifying all men of all races and religions in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

PERSECUTIONS.

As the cause of The Bab spread throughout Persia, the most dire troubles and persecutions descended upon the believers, who were known as Babis. The Mohammedans fell upon them, destroying their properties and killing men, women and children. Over twenty thousand believers willingly gave up property, family and life rather than deny their faith, which act would, in

most cases, have saved them. In Persia even as late as 1901 there were over one hundred and seventy believers martyred at one time in the city of Yazd.

BAHA'O'LLAH.

The Promised One, Baha'o'llah, a youth descended from a family of nobility and prominence in Persia, appeared at the time and place foretold by The Bab. He arose with vigor and force, upholding and publicly teaching the truths taught by The Bab. Shortly after The Bab's martyrdom, when the great persecutions of the believers began, Baha'o'llah with others of the new faith was cast into an underground dungeon in Teheran, Persia, and with chains about His neck He was held prisoner while His properties were pillaged and confiscated. Most of Baha'o'llah's fellow prisoners were killed, while He with some of the believers was finally sent in exile to Baghdad in Irak-Arabi.

In Baghdad Baha'o'llah arose with spiritual power and divine dominion to spread the new faith. He labored to bring strength and assurance to the Babis and He breathed into them a new spirit, for the massacres and persecutions had thrown them into a most lamentable condition of both mental and physical distress. At one time Baha'o'llah went from Baghdad alone

into the mountain fastnesses of Kurdistan, and there for two years He lived the life of a recluse, preparing Himself spiritually for His coming mission. Then He returned to Baghdad to care for and to lead the people.

THE PROMISED ONE.

In The Bab's prophetic writings there were found many passages, through the spiritual interpretation of which the people were to be enabled to recognize the Promised One who would follow after Him, and as the believers came more and more under Baha'o'llah's guidance they realized the profoundness of His divine knowledge and they looked upon Him as their guide. In the coming of Baha'o'llah was the fulfillment of The Bab's promise, the coming of The Ancient of Days, The Lord of Hosts, to which The Bab had testified by a life of service and by martyrdom.

Through Baha'o'llah's wisdom and spiritual insight there came calmness, assurance and strength to the followers. But as the movement increased in numbers the fanaticism of the Musulman clergy against the believers continued to increase rather than diminish, until finally at the instigation of these priests an international agreement was made between the despotic King of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey, through

which arrangement Baha'o'llah and a band of His followers were ordered to a more distant exile in Constantinople in order to separate them from the believers in Persia, for the Mohammedans were fearful lest their own religion would be overthrown by this new faith.

Upon the eve of His departure from Irak-Arabi to Constantinople in April, 1863, Baha'o'llah declared Himself, to His most trusted followers, to be the One to whom The Bab had borne witness as "He Whom God Shall Manifest." After a long journey, overland and by sea, Baha'o'llah with His band of exiles arrived in Constantinople, where He remained for several months. Then He was sent still farther on to Adrianople in Roumelia, in order to separate Him as far as possible from the world which His cause was agitating.

After five years of exile in Adrianople, Turkey, during which the cause continued to grow both inwardly and outwardly in strength, another decree, issued by the despotic Ottoman government, ordered Baha'o'llah to be sent to the prison fortress town of Akka (Acre), a Turkish penal colony on the Mediterranean sea just north of Mount Carmel in Syria. In this land of Sharon and Carmel where, according to the ancient prophets, the Messiah would appear and the Glory of God would be manifest in the latter

days, Baha'o'llah lived and taught. During the first two years in the Holy Land He was closely guarded within the prison of the fortress of Akka, but soon His greatness became so apparent to the prison officers and He manifested such spiritual power that they showed Him great consideration, and were most kind and friendly, for they saw only truth and perfect righteousness in Him. Thus the material condition of the Bahai community was greatly benefitted. First Baha'o'llah was allowed the liberty of the fortress city, then His tent was pitched upon the Mount of Carmel, and He spent much of His time at Behje, a villa upon the plain of Akka.

During these years many believers and truth-seekers came great distances to visit Baha'o'llah and receive from Him spiritual understanding, they in turn going forth to spread His cause in the far parts of the world. Through His Tablets or epistles Baha'o'llah reached many people in distant lands, answering their questions and giving them spiritual advice. He also wrote many general treatises upon spiritual subjects. These contain explanations of the principles of His teachings, as well as certain general admonitions and ordinances through the observance of which mankind will evolve to a high state of material and spiritual welfare. In His writings Baha'o'llah unlocked the mysteries of the spir-

itual truths in the holy books of the religions of the past. He clearly demonstrated that all truth is one truth, and that all prophets have manifested the one same spirit of God.

THE BAHAI MOVEMENT.

With the coming of Baha'o'llah and the establishment of His religion the mission of His forerunner, The Bab, was completed, and the Babi Cause became the Bahai Cause. The mission of The Bab being practically confined to Persia and to a few neighboring countries, His ordinances and teachings were calculated to meet the local needs and conditions there extant. The mission of Baha'o'llah being to the whole world, His teachings were universal in character and were directly applicable to any and all conditions of men, irrespective of race, religion or degree of human attainment.

In the month of May, 1892, after forty years of spiritual labor, Baha'o'llah departed this life. He had given His teachings to the world, in their entirety, and His direct mission was completed, yet there was more work to be done in order to establish His cause in the world. The spirit of the Bahai teachings remained to be practically demonstrated in the world. For the accomplishment of this Baha'o'llah exhorted His followers to look toward His son, Abdul Baha, as the ex-

pounder of His teachings, upon whose shoulders His mantle would fall, and through whose service to humanity the life of the Kingdom would be demonstrated to all mankind. In order to insure the unity and solidarity of the cause, and to protect the believers from disunion and differences, Baha'o'llah in two different places in the Book of Akdas (one of His chief writings) commanded His followers after His departure to turn their faces to "The Branch Extended from the Ancient Root," and to refer all matters to "The Center of The Covenant," which center is Abdul Baha. Also, in the Book of The Testament, Baha'o'llah explains that by "The Branch Extended from the Ancient Root" is meant the "Greatest Branch," Abdul Baha, to whom all should turn.

ABDUL BAHA.

Abdul Baha was born in Teheran in northern Persia, upon the 23rd day of May, 1844, the very day upon which The Bab gathered His disciples together in southern Persia and there made His declaration. Abdul Baha was named Abbas, Abdul Baha (The Servant of God) being his spiritual title, the name by which he is known as a spiritual teacher.

In the accounts of Abdul Baha handed down by those who knew him when a child we are

told that at an early age he showed a contemplative and deeply spiritual nature combined with a highly forceful and active disposition. When he was only eight years old, the greatest persecution of the Bahais began in Persia and it was but a short time after this that he went into exile with his father, Baha'o'llah.

During the ten years spent with Baha'o'llah, in Baghdad, Abdul Baha passed from childhood into adolescence and manhood. Because of the vicissitudes of the exile he never attended school, but through constant association with Baha'o'llah and devotion and service in the cause Abdul Baha grew strong in knowledge, in wisdom and in spiritual attainments. As he attained maturity, he became Baha'o'llah's chief aid and support in carrying on His work. It was Abdul Baha who first interviewed all persons who came to confer with Baha'o'llah, and so ordered matters that Baha'o'llah could meet those having spiritual desires and capacity and who needed Him, without losing time with those who came only through curiosity. During those days, Baha'o'llah was visited by many believers from Persia, as well as by truth seekers from among various religions and nations. Abdul Baha himself also taught the people diligently, and he discussed religious principles with learned theologians, who marveled at his wisdom and his

interpretation of spiritual teachings. They could not understand how this youth, uneducated from their standard of erudition, could produce with great ease and fluency arguments that none could refute or gainsay, for he had never attended a college or university, as is the custom among Oriental savants and theologians.

When the time came for Baha'o'llah to reveal Himself as the Promised One of all religions, it was Abdul Baha who first recognized Him in His divine capacity, and it was Abdul Baha who first voiced the mighty message of the Manifestation of the Spirit of God among men.

ABDUL BAHAS SERVICE TO HUMANITY.

Abdul Baha's life has been one of service to the Bahai Cause. During the exile journeys of Baha'o'llah and His followers, and the imprisonment in Adrianople and Akka, Abdul Baha was constantly serving spiritually and materially. When persecution was at its height, he encouraged the people, comforted them, and gave them hope, and when sickness and disease broke out among the Bahais, while they were confined in the prison of Akka, Abdul Baha was the chief nurse and servant of all.

It is often remarked that when in repose Abdul Baha appears much older than his real age. This

is undoubtedly true, for he has had to bear not only his own trials but also the troubles of the people who have surrounded him from time to time, depending upon him to help carry their burdens and share their troubles. But when Abdul Baha speaks, voicing the Bahai Message of Glad Tidings to the world, one soon becomes aware that the spirit which proceeds from him to those whom he teaches is not a spirit capable of being affected by age nor earthly conditions, but is the spirit of eternal life which gives hope, vigor and happiness to all who partake of it.

The great desire of Abdul Baha is to be known as the servant of God. In his life of service is seen the power, glory and majesty of Baha'o'llah, who declared His son to be "The Center of The Covenant" and "the Greatest Branch from the Pre-Existent Root." Through Abdul Baha's service the spiritual glory of Baha'o'llah is being manifested in the world today, and the Kingdom of the Father is being realized here upon the earth.

ABDUL BAHAS METHOD OF TEACHING.

Abdul Baha's method of teaching spiritual truths is direct and concrete. He reaches the heart and through spiritual contact penetrates the soul of the individual. Many beautiful and touching incidents are related in the Orient of

the way in which, through long suffering and kindness, he has won the hearts of those who, because of their prejudices, formerly were his enemies. Caring for the sick and protecting the oppressed form a large part of his daily duties. One of the titles applied to him in the Orient is "father of the poor."

Abdul Baha's power is that of love. In going into his presence something within one's soul seems to respond to his soul. Thus a spiritual bond is formed which is most far-reaching, for it is of the nature of divine love and always remains with one. Through his life and example he is teaching people the life and the way of the Kingdom. He has a message for every one, and as one meets and contacts with him in spirit it is as if a new force were added to one's nature. The power of the love of God is brought very close to those who come in contact with Abdul Baha.

ABDUL BAHAS IMPRISONMENT.

Abdul Baha remained in Akka a prisoner for just forty years. His freedom came through an adjustment of governmental matters, brought about by the re-establishment of the Turkish constitution in the summer of 1908. During this confinement, Abdul Baha was yearly visited by friends and followers from all parts of the world, although often it was with the greatest difficulty

that these friends were able to see him, and sometimes the interviews were perforce very brief. Notwithstanding these conditions, each pilgrim received bounteously from Abdul Baha, who is the source of the spiritual life of the Bahai world, and then hastened to his or to her own country to share this gift of God with others.

THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT.

The followers of the Bahai Religion are held together by a powerful spirit of love for Abdul Baha. As the life blood goes from the heart to each organ of the body, nourishing and bringing it into functional relation with every other organ, so from Abdul Baha, who is the center and heart of the Bahai Cause, goes forth the spirit of the love of God to each of the multitude of its members. All who have experienced this spiritual contact with Abdul Baha realize that in reality he is different and apart from other men. To each one who has had this experience it has been demonstrated in a unique manner, primarily for the individual's own personal enlightenment. Abdul Baha's mission as "The Center of The Covenant" holds the Bahais together in an organic body, and through the channel of his life of service the Bahai spirit is forming a new religious life in the world.

ABDUL BAHÁ'S TRAVELS.

After his freedom Abdul Baha began to travel. Two winters he spent in Egypt, the summer and fall of the year 1911 he spent in London and in Paris, and it will be recalled by many persons that Abdul Baha visited America in 1912, delivering addresses in various cities and towns, explaining the Bahai principles and their application to the present-day religious, social and economic needs of humanity. Even up to as short a time as six years ago many people regarded the universality of the philosophy taught by Abdul Baha as far too great a step to be taken from the particular and familiar philosophy of the past into the unexplored universal realm of religious thinking of the future. But the present general thinking world can with a quickened religious perception look back and see the potency of Abdul Baha's teaching, now realizing that he with his message was simply ahead of and beyond the understanding of the general prevailing world of religious thought of that time. However, conditions in the world have so changed during the past few years, that the time of restricted thought has now passed, and humanity is now more awake than ever before to the vital spiritual principles of religion, progress and civilization. During these travels Abdul Baha met

people who were attracted by the spirit of the Bahai Cause, and he sowed spiritual seeds in their hearts which will grow in God's own time and bring forth the fruit of the Kingdom.

ABDUL BAHÁ IN THE HOLY LAND.

During the past five years of war, Abdul Baha has been in the Holy Land. Recent telegraphic reports from the advancing British army in Palestine announce that he is safe and living on Mount Carmel, surrounded by a group of followers. In a recent letter written by Abdul Baha to friends in Teheran, Persia, he portrays the then present condition in Palestine in the following terms:

"It has been a long time since the thread of correspondence has been entirely broken, and the hearts (of the people here) have been affected with sorrow and agitation. Now praise be to God that in these days, through divine favor, the black clouds are dispersed and the light of composure and tranquillity has enlightened this region, and the tyrannous (Turkish) government is done away with and followed by a just (British) administration. All the people have been delivered from the most great hardships and the most difficult afflictions. In this huge tempest and violent revolution, in which all nations of the world were caught and were involved in dire ca-

lamiety, cities were destroyed, souls were slaughtered, properties were pillaged and taken as booty, the cries and lamentations of the helpless ones were raised from every prominent spot, and the tears fell from the eyes of the orphans like a flowing torrent in all the oppressed countries.

* * * It has meanwhile become evident that the teachings of His Holiness Baha'o'llah are the cause of the comfort and illumination of the world of humanity. In the Tablets (letters of Baha'o'llah) the justice and the administrative sagacity of the government of England have been repeatedly dwelt upon, and now it has become clear that in reality the inhabitants of this country after untold sufferings have attained to composure and security."

THE NEW DAY.

Abdul Baha teaches that the world is in the beginning of a new age and that "this is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of the unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most

Great Peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers.”

As with each of the vital messages of truth as given by the inspired Prophets or Manifestations of God in the past ages, the Bahai message of universal religion comes at a time of the greatest world need, for in this day the creeds and the dogmas of the past have lost their spiritual power, and the world is reaching out for a religion which will be a living spiritual factor in the life of humanity. The Bahai Movement is a religious cause, the institutions and spirit of which are not founded upon the human thought of past days. Being above and beyond the natural trend of thought, this cause is forming within the souls of men higher ideals, thoughts and actions commensurate with the present and future needs of humanity, and these high ideals are ushering in the beginning of a greater civilization than the world has yet seen.

ORIENT AND OCCIDENT.

The Orient has been the source of the world's inspiration, while in the Occident has appeared the fruition of this inspiration in the form of a highly evolved civilization. As from Asia the Caucasian peoples swept westward from time to time in great wave movements to rule the world, so have the spiritual truths brought by Christ and

the Prophets—the givers of religion to the world—had their dawnings or points of appearance in the East, for these great divine personages each appeared in Asia, and from her shores Their followers and disciples embarked to carry Their messages of truth to the peoples of the other continents. However, in this day and age the Orient and her people are widely separated from the Western world. Enmity, suspicion and lack of confidence and understanding between the Oriental and Occidental peoples are the greatest obstacles to be overcome before universal brotherhood and a real peace can be realized in the world. This present gulf between the Orient and the Occident is the result of ages of differing civilizations which have been evolved by religious systems and philosophies foreign to one another, for the civilization of a people, with its many institutions of education, its language, its arts, its philosophy, and even the very temperament of the people themselves, are but the result or the fruitage of their religious ideals past and present and those of their forebears.

Here in the Occident our civilization and temperament are equally the result of the spirit of our philosophy and the ideals of the life and education under which we are trained.

The Oriental is essentially a mystic and an ardent religionist. With him his religion is by

far the most important interest he has in life. If he is superstitious, his fanaticism is without limit, but if his soul is alive with the true and the real spirit of religion he is another being; he is a conscious and a self-acknowledged factor in the great world of humanity and its oneness.

It is upon the religious ground that the Oriental and the Occidental can meet in common understanding and comradeship. Through the Bahai teachings this chasm between the East and the West is bridged, and now in this movement Orientals and Occidentals are meeting on a common ground of religious sympathy, understanding and brotherhood.

RELIGION AND PEACE.

Religious differences have been the chief cause of warfare, for the bloodiest of battles have been fought between opposing religious factions, while religious sympathy and understanding have always made for peace and prosperity. Prior to the beginning of the Bahai Movement little or nothing was being generally taught or written about peace, arbitration, universal language, suffrage or any of the other universal institutions through which people now realize are to be found the tranquillity and the progress and advancement of humanity. During the past half century the world has awakened to the necessity for all of

these institutions, and now the most enlightened people are realizing that the lack of spiritual or religious understanding, with the accompanying lack of moral perception, is the real cause of all human ills. While Baha'o'llah's teaching was ahead of the world of His day, the world of today is realizing more and more, as time goes on, the value of that teaching.

BAHAI UNIVERSALITY.

The adherents of the Bahai teaching have no church organization or form of enrolled membership. They are composed of people of various denominations, sects and religions who, aroused by the quickening religious spirit of this present age, are banded together and spiritually united in their efforts to infuse into all humanity these progressive religious ideals. These they believe to be the fundamental principles of the great world civilization which will evolve as the spirit of internationalism grows and peoples and nations arise to co-ordinate in all their activities, thus forming an interdependent federation encompassing the entire world and all of its peoples.

Regarding this movement, Abdul Baha makes the following statement: "The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You can never organize the Bahai Cause. The Bahai Movement is the spirit of this age. It is the essence of all the high-

est ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive movement; the teachings of all the religions and societies are found here; the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this cause * * * the Socialists and Philosophers find their theories fully developed in this movement."

INVESTIGATION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

One finds in the Bahai teaching the following principles: "No man should follow blindly his ancestors and forefathers; nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and investigate truth in order that he may find the truth."

One welcomes a religion with assurance which not only allows but advocates that the individual shall inquire into the realities of religion, since so much of the creed and dogma of the religions of the past have forbidden people from investigating for themselves, but rather imposed upon them the beliefs and religious forms of their forefathers, which were not to be questioned. The superstitions of the past would not have persisted as long as they did if people had understood the reality of religion. The proof of this is now that people are studying into the true principles of religion, the superstitions are disappearing, and the peo-

ple are becoming free from the incubus of religious imaginings.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

Abdul Baha teaches that "religion must be reasonable; it must agree perfectly with science, so that science shall sanction religion, and religion sanction science. The two must be brought together, indissolubly in the reality. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept a thing because it was called religion, even though it were not in accord with human reason."

The imaginations and superstitions of many of the religious systems of the past are incompatible with common sense and science, for they are but the thoughts and the imaginings of men of past ages. The universal basic spiritual truths of the many religions, as differentiated from the superstitions incorporated in their theological and dogmatic humanly evolved systems of thought, are scientific and in conformity with the known laws of science. The Bahais believe that when men understand the true principles of religion no conflict will be found between these truths and the material sciences.

WOMAN.

The advent of this movement has found a large and growing response among progressive women the world around, but particularly is its effect to

be noted among the women of the Orient. Among the most prominent of The Bab's followers was Kurrat-ul-Ayn, poetess and heroine of this cause, who, after an eventful career, in which she stood forth as a confirmed exponent of the new faith, suffered a martyr's death at the hands of the Mohammedan ecclesiastics because of her activities in her religious propaganda. As a spiritual disciple of this new age and a woman many decades ahead of her time, her life is an inspiration to all, and especially to her sisters of the Orient, who, through the cause for which she died, are now being lifted from their former condition of ignorance, superstition and oppression into a state of knowledge and freedom.

Regarding the equality of men and women, Abdul Baha says: "This is peculiar to the teachings of Baha'o'llah, for all former religious systems placed men above women. Daughters and sons must follow the same form of study and the same education. Having one course of education promotes unity among mankind."

In the Mohammedan world the condition of woman is so closely allied to and prescribed by the religious tenets that the value of true religious doctrines will readily be recognized. A living religious enthusiasm is needed to give force to this modern movement among Moslem women, for it must first combat and overcome the preju-

dice, ignorance and fanaticism of the Moslem clerical doctrinaires before education and enlightenment can reach into the time-honored but darkened seclusion of the women.

Through a broad and liberal education along material lines, balanced by a knowledge of man's moral and spiritual duties, the Bahais believe that the superstitions of the past will disappear and with them the prejudice and ignorance which have always made for man's limitation. The Bahai Movement stands strongly for the education of woman, even going so far as to teach that it is more necessary for parents to educate their girls than their boys. Women being the mothers and the first teachers of the race, it is more necessary that they be educated than men.

EDUCATION.

Abdul Baha says: "All mankind should partake of both knowledge and education, and this partaking of knowledge and of education is one of the necessities of religion. The education of each child is obligatory. If there are no parents, the community must look after the child. Each person should have his part of the sciences."

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.

From the religious viewpoint this teaching offers to the world the fulfillment of the revelations of the past, an all-inclusive, universal teaching, so

broad that people of all races and of all creeds find a place therein. It is essentially a religious movement, a spiritual teaching, free from the limitations of sect and "ism," and constructive in its building upon the faith of the individual and upon the pure teachings of the past, thus increasing love and devotion for God and creating within each soul the desire to manifest these divine bounties through brotherly service to one's fellowmen. The teaching holds that mankind needs and seeks spiritual guidance. This divine guidance has always come to humanity through the instrumentality of the prophets or revealers of truth. These chosen souls have been the founders of the great religious world movements. They have manifested the Spirit of God to the people of the world, and through these divine manifestations men have known God and have become quickened by the spirit and brought into that state known as the life eternal.

REVELATION.

The foundation of the Bahai philosophy is expressed in this short quotation from one of Baha'o'llah's writings: "The root of all knowledge is the knowledge of God. Glory be to Him! and this knowledge is impossible save through His Manifestation." Each of the world's great manifested spiritual teachers has taught the same

eternal truth, revealing in it the measure and in the terms applicable to the people of His time. This truth has ever been the mainspring and source of human advancement and civilization.

The Divine Covenant, or promise to the world, of the coming in the "end of the days" of a great Manifestation, One who would arise with spiritual power to establish upon earth God's Kingdom of Peace was made through the prophets of the past. Though the personalities of the Prophets differed, yet the divine power which spoke through each was the same in spirit and reality. Each Prophet revealed God and the law of the Divine Kingdom in proportion to the needs of the age to which He ministered, and in terms and parables familiar to the people. In their purity all the revealed religious teachings are in perfect accord; all teach the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

ONENESS OF ALL RELIGION.

Again in the words of Abdul Baha is found the definition of the one foundation of all religion, as follows: "The foundation underlying all the divine precepts is that one reality. It must needs be reality, and reality is one, not multiple. Therefore the foundation of the divine religions is one; but we can see that certain forms have come in, certain imitations of forms and ceremonies have

crept in. They are heretical, they are accidental, because they differ; hence they cause differences among religions; but if we set aside these imitations and seek the reality of the foundation we shall all agree; religion is one and not multiple."

Human differences, imaginations and superstitions have been the cause of religious division, dissention and disintegration, but true spirituality has ever been the source and mainspring of man's unity in religion and advancement in civilization. Each of the great world civilizations has had its conception and birth in a spiritually active religion, while the downfall of civilizations has been brought about by spiritually lifeless religious ideals, shrouded in forms and in superstitions, causing the fall of morals and the decay of civilization.

THE BAHAI GLAD TIDINGS.

The unique message which the Bahais are giving to the world is that of the fulfillment of The Covenant made by God with the people of the world through the prophets of old. Again a Manifestation of the Word has come in accordance with promise of old, this time in Baha'o'llah who came for the whole world, so that all people of all religions, races and nations might become one in faith and brothers in the divine kingdom. In order to establish the kingdom of peace upon

earth, The Bab prepared the way for Baha'o'llah. Through Baha'o'llah the power, spirit and wisdom of the new age of the Kingdom dawned in the world. Now, through Abdul Baha, this new age of spiritual light is being proclaimed and established in the various parts of the earth.

OBJECT OF RELIGION.

Abdul Baha says: "Every religion is the greatest divine effulgence, the cause of life among men, the cause of honor of humanity, and is productive of the life everlasting among humankind. Religion is not for enmity or hatred. It is not for tyranny or injustice. If religion be the cause of enmity and rancor, if it should prove to be the cause of alieniating men, assuredly non-religion would be better, for religion and the teachings which appertain to it are as a course of treatment. What is the object of any course of treatment? It is to cure and heal; but if the outcome of a course of treatment should be productive of mere diagnosis and discussion of symptoms then the abolition of it is evidently preferable. In this sense abandoning religion would be a step toward unity."

PRESENT WORLD PROBLEMS.

The Bahais hold that each age of the world has had its needs and its problems to solve, and these problems have been solved by the divine

manifestations. Now, in this latter age, the great problems, economic, political and religious are not confined, as in the past, to certain restricted geographic areas, but are universal. Through the advance of civilization all countries and peoples of the world have been brought together until, for the first time in its history, the world now finds that it has entered upon a universal era in its progress. This is the universal age, in which all peoples and nations are to merge and develop into one great world civilization.

As the former ages have had certain spiritual or religious needs, so this present and coming universal age, past the threshold of which the world now stands, has its own needs, spiritual and religious. The world is now ready for the spiritual unity and harmony of its people. The universal religion now is needed in order that the universal civilization may be realized.

ONENESS OF HUMANITY.

In treating of the oneness of humanity Abdul Baha says: "Baha'o'llah addresses Himself to the world of men, saying: 'Ye are all leaves of one tree and the fruits of one arbor,' that is, the world of existence is no other than one tree, and the nations or peoples are like unto the different branches or limbs thereof, and human individuals

are similar to the fruits and blossoms thereof—while in all past religious books and epistles the world of humanity has been divided into two parts, one called the people of the Book, or the Pure Tree, and the other, the Evil Tree. One half of the people of the world were looked upon as belonging to the faithful, and the other half as belonging to the irreligious and the infidel; one half of the people were consigned to the mercy of the Creator, and the other half were considered as objects of the wrath of their Maker; but Baha'o'llah proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity; He submerged all mankind in the sea of divine generosity."

THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

The people of each religion look for the coming of a prophet or teacher who will fulfill the hopes of their own teaching and establish the truth of the world. The Christians look for the coming of the Christ (Spirit) and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom; the Jews await the coming of their Messiah, and God's Kingdom on earth; the Moslems believe that the Mahdi will come and prepare the way for the coming of the Lord and the Kingdom; the Zoroastrians have prophecies relating to the coming of Shah Bahram, and the establishment of the divine order of things, foretold in their holy books; the

Hindus believe that the Divine Spirit Krishna will speak again to the world for the enlightenment of the people; and the Buddhists look for the coming of the great Fifth Buddha, whose mission will be that of bringing a general world-wide spiritual enlightenment, while the Theosophists and some other religious cults, of modern organization, look for the coming of a universal religious teacher or great spiritual master who will bring a divine message which will unite all mankind in one brotherhood under one God.

THE BAHAI MESSAGE.

With the coming of the Bahai teachers, and the cause which they have established, the people of the various religions find the fulfillment of the sacred teachings of the past, and also the solution of the great latter-day problem of religious unity. The Bahai teaching confirms and completes all religious teachings which have gone before, and offers a practical philosophy which meets the present-day spiritual needs of humanity.

In teaching of Baha'o'llah the great Master Divine Revealer of truth, whose coming for ages has been the hope of the world, Abdul Baha says that He was the educator of the world of humanity; His teachings were universal and con-

ferred illumination upon mankind; His knowledge was innate and spontaneous, not acquired; He answered the questions of all sages, solved the difficult problems of humanity, and withstood all the persecutions and sufferings heaped upon Him; He was a joy bringer and the herald of the Kingdom of Happiness; His knowledge was infinite and his wisdom all comprehensive; the penetration of His Word and the potency of His influence was so great as to humble even His worst enemies; sorrows and tribulations did not vex Him; His courage and conviction was God-like; day unto day He became firmer and more zealous; He was the establisher of universal civilization, the unifier of religions, the standard of universal peace, and the embodiment of all the highest and noblest virtues of the world of humanity.

BAHAI SACRED WRITINGS.

The collective writings of The Bab are known as "The Beyan." These treat of the coming of Baha'o'llah, and contain exhortations to the people, calling them to purify themselves and prepare to meet the promised One that they might be fitted to serve Him. Baha'o'llah wrote many treatises in the form of books and epistles, in which He demonstrates the oneness of the spirit of all the former religious teachings, and

also treats of the present teaching in its relations to the religions of the past. Many of these writings were in reply to special questions asked by men of learning, and were therefore written from various points of thought—Moslem, Jewish, Christian, etc. The writings of Abdul Baha are explanatory of the teachings of Baha'o'llah. Abdul Baha's method of teaching is through his life of service to humanity as, well as by his pen and spoken word. In this influence of his daily life he exemplifies the principles of Baha'o'llah.

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS AWAKENING.

The natural tendency of man is to remain in his own particular groove of religious feeling and thought until compelled to give this up by conditions and forces apparently outside of himself. This is often brought about by disappointment and suffering, and through his relations with other people. As it is with the religious thought and feeling of the individual, so it is with that of nations or of peoples. From age to age their religious convictions undergo certain changes and modifications produced upon the general or cosmic psychology of the mass by the spiritual conditions attending the appearance in the world of the great divine revelators or manifestations.

Attending the rise or advent of these divine personages is a general religious awakening, a quickening spirit which, though it works silently in the hearts of men, eventually is realized and recognized by all as the light of a new spiritual era or epoch. The prophet or the manifestation of the age is the center of this divine enlightenment, and as the souls of people awaken in response to the spirit of the new age they recognize the divine mission of the one who brings the religious message of the day.

PRESENT RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK.

The great changes in human conditions, produced as the world passes out of an age of formal religious thought into one with a new spirit and progressive ideals, cause the downfall of old institutions which have served their day and the establishment of new institutions calculated to meet the present and future needs of humanity. This time of change is always a trying one. This passing from the spiritual adolescence to the maturity of the race, as it were, is attended by the disruption and collapse of former ideals before the people have really sufficiently gotten hold of the new principles to be firmly settled therein. At this present time the world is in the throes of such an epoch. These years of war have witnessed great changes

in the ideals of the world, and in no phase of life is this change more manifest than in religious thought and feeling. Through bloodshed and calamity peoples of different classes, nations, races and creeds have been thrown together into an intimate contact upon so vast a scale as to be quite without parallel in the pages of history. The intense hardships and sufferings of these multitudes have freed hearts and minds of many time honored superstitions and traditions which composed the outer shell or form of religion.

While men are thus being torn away from former religious limitations through the destruction of their mental fetiches, found to be untenable under the present every-day conditions of life, a spirit within the deep religious nature of the masses has been aroused, a something which is causing them to realize a condition of spiritual paucity upon their part and of bewilderment as they vainly attempt to adjust their religious ideas to this new world psychology into which they have been hurled. It is, therefore, not surprising that people in general should be realizing and acknowledging that they are facing a new day of religious reality.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

The influence of religion as a reconstructive force as well as a destructive force is very clearly

seen in history. Certain fundamentally true religious doctrines and fraternal sentiments have united peoples and have been the foundation movements of progressive civilization, while upon the other hand superstitious religious teachings and prejudices taught by religious leaders and preachers have had much to do with the bringing about of wars. Search the pages of history. The student will find but few wars which were brought about quite independently of the clergy, who exert such an influence upon humanity and direct to so great an extent the destinies of men. In the war just past the religious leaders in the various countries have exerted so great an influence for the stimulation of war valor that the power which they exercised has been recognized by the governments and has been to a great extent used to rally the people and to stir their patriotism.

RELIGION AND THE PRESENT PROBLEM.

As religion has played so important a part and exerted such a strong influence in the formation of the policies and ideals of nations it is timely that the world should now begin to consider what religion may have to offer toward the peace of the world and the attending great international problems which now confront the nations

—what constructive influence it can exert in establishing more cordial relations and a better understanding and sympathy between peoples of the different civilizations and races from which the new great universal world civilization is to arise, by extending its protecting justice and peace to all the peoples and countries of the world both large and small.

PROBLEM OF PEACE OR WAR.

The universal problem now in the minds of people is this: Is humanity to continue indefinitely this struggle between nations, with its seasons of war separated by longer or shorter periods of so-called peace, during which the nations are recuperating and renewing their engines of destruction in order to again enter into open conflict, destroying that which has taken years of labor to construct; or has the time not come for a change from this archaic system of destruction to one of justice, co-operation and construction between the nations, a system conducive to peace?

Upon this question the world is now divided. On the one hand are the extreme militarists, who hold that the peace and prosperity of the nations can only be maintained by developing and maintaining the military strength of the individual nation, that the world progresses through mili-

tary valor, that peace is devitalizing to a nation, and that without war a nation becomes effeminate and decadent. Then, upon the other hand, there are those who hold a view quite opposite to that of the militarists; namely, that peace and co-operation—not military conflict and destruction—are the conditions under which the highest virtues of man are born and develop.

INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATIONS.

World conditions in this twentieth century are not what they were in past epochs. In the present time through travel, communication, and commerce the interdependence of peoples and nations has become a recognized factor heretofore comparatively non-existent, which now has to be met by the world. In primitive times in sparsely populated countries, where families were separated by distances, individual feuds, quarrels, and warfare were the rule. But as the lands filled up, cities were formed and people lived in closer contact one with another, conditions changed and became so modified that co-operation between individuals became necessary and conducive to the best good of all. When the majority of the people in a land wanted law and order, they established it; and with an adequate police force order was forced upon the disorderly members of society, and in this way life was

made safe for the mass of the people. In other words, from the material viewpoint, conditions had changed. It no longer being possible for one man to enrich himself at the expense of his neighbor through pillage and theft, men then began to co-operate, and in this new state of interdependence each found his horizon of life enlarged and his scope for development increased.

From this same material standpoint a parallel may here be drawn between the development of peace between families or tribes and peace between nations. In past epochs nations and peoples were separated by geographic boundaries, not easily surmountable. In those days it was possible for the people of one country to invade the territory of another nation and enrich themselves by carrying off booty and plunder (often in the form of bullion and slaves) and thus from material considerations prosper through war. But now in this day those ancient conditions no longer exist. Now nations are so dependent upon one another for finances, food-stuffs, and supplies of all kinds, as well as for the output of their own products, that their welfare and prosperity no longer depend upon war but upon peace, no longer upon conquest, but upon co-operation with neighboring nations.

In this present time nations lose far more

through war than they can possibly gain. A nation now at war after gaining an overwhelming victory over an adversary, finds it quite impossible to exact sufficient tribute to recompense it for the material outlay, the loss of life, and the many terrible after-effects of war which it suffers. Thus war has become a losing proposition, one doomed to loss even before entered upon.

This interdependence of nations and peoples is a new phase of world progress, which now needs to be reckoned with in dealing with international and military matters.

MILITARISM CONDUCTIVE TO WAR.

The development of national military power and preparedness for war, so fervently advocated by many as a national protection and a means for peace, instead of making for peace has quite the opposite effect, for it makes for war. A standing army and a large and increasing navy is not only a great economic drain upon a people, but such a system in itself keeps alive the spirit of war. It tends to make a people proud and overbearing, and further the spirit of fear and hatred between peoples, races and nations, thus psychologically laying the foundation for strife through the mental and moral destructive influences. The system of militarism keeps the spirit of war alive, keeps the people in training for war,

and places in their hands and ready for use at all times the engines and instruments of war, thus making war possible at short notice and with little provocation. It is a recognized fact that with a large and a growing armament and a standing army in training for war the time comes when the leaders of the people want to fight; and when such a group of people want war, like individuals under the power of the same warlike thought, sooner or later a pretext will be found and they will bring on a fight. Thus the means of war become a cause of war, because these means exert both a conscious and an unconscious influence for war, increasing hatred between nations and races, all of which must be considered as fundamental elements in the general psychology of war, which psychology is the real underlying cause of wars of aggression.

BAHAI PEACE TEACHING.

The Bahai Religion teaches that in order to abolish the causes of war a blow must be struck at all hatred and enmity between classes, races, nations and religions, and at the greed and avarice inherent in savage man. In the words of Abdul Baha we find that "it is established that all the prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them, and to put in action the law of love and not enmity.

Consequently, we must throw aside all these prejudices, the racial prejudice, the patriotic prejudice, the religious and political prejudices. We must become the cause of unity of the human race."

These disturbing causes, i. e., prejudices, are at root in the soul of man. As the actions of peoples as well as of individuals are but the reflection of their thought and ideals, action—national as well as individual—can be traced back to the general and personal thought of the people. The power of imagination is a far greater element in life than material considerations, for the actions of people are ruled by the power of their sentiments, thoughts, affections, prejudices and material desires. The cause of this recent world war was greed, national prejudice, pride, hatred and fear, all of which causes have their root in the soul of man and arise through a lack of spiritual assurance, poise and development. Peace can only be permanently established by freeing the world from this obsession of war thought, by freeing the people from greed, fear, desire of aggression, and from racial, national and religious prejudice, all of which make up the cause of war. Because of this recent war the thinking public is now alive to the need of this day, and realizes that the question of maintaining a lasting peace is by far the most important issue at

present before the world. The real inner peace cannot be objectively forced upon a people or peoples. It cannot come from without. It must be born in a people, spiritually and psychologically, before it begins to be manifest in their civic and national life. And now the question is: How is this inner change to be accomplished? How are prejudice, hate, and materialism to be overcome? The Bahais meet this question with a positive teaching in word and deed of the divine love principle of true religion. The Bahai Movement, heralding the universal religious cause of this new age, stands for the oneness in spirit and in deed of all peoples of all religions, races and nations. It therefore deals directly or indirectly with the many attending human problems. Abdul Baha teaches that now is the time "that all men and nations shall make peace; that there shall be universal peace among governments, universal peace among religions, universal peace among races, universal peace among the denizens of all regions. Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace. The realization of this principle is the crying need of the time."

RELIGION AND DEEDS.

This teaching holds aloft a high spiritual ideal which must be realized in deeds and actions.

"These are the days of faith and deeds, not the days of words and lip service." "The effect of deeds is in truth more powerful than that of words." "Deeds reveal the station of the man." Such are the maxims of the Bahais. Therefore, in advancing the ideal of peace upon earth it is not merely advanced as an ethereal dream not to be realized in this world, but along with this ideal are presented certain international reforms and institutions for which the Bahais stand, and through the application of which they believe that war and strife will cease and a constructive system of co-operation will take the place of the present and past strife and hatred between nations.

The Bahai Cause teaches that brotherly love is the means through which the true civilization of humanity will be realized. Prejudice and hatred between peoples of different classes, nations, races or religions, are destructive factors in the world, and are the cause of the retrogression of the race. Therefore, the followers of the Bahai Movement, in order firmly to lay a foundation for human solidarity, are doing their utmost to destroy these various forms of animosity and prejudice by striving to implant in the hearts of people the principles of the love of God.

THE RACIAL QUESTION.

One of the most serious questions of the day is that of the existing racial prejudice and hatred. This distrust causes the oppression of one race by another race, producing ill feeling and strife and creating acts which sometimes come to open warfare. Those souls who have been touched by the spirit of the Bahai Cause have born in their hearts a deep love for the people of other races which precludes their ever harboring any traces of racial antagonism, and is the basis of justice and equity in their relations with all mankind. When traveling around the world, visiting the Bahai people in various countries, Oriental and Occidental, one is much impressed by the affinity and mutual trust and understanding created between the peoples of different races and colors by this religion of practical brotherhood, and in the living principles of this cause one finds the solution and means of adjustment of this great and threatening menace to humanity—race hatred.

Even in reading this brief sketch of some of the various constructive Bahai principles herein outlined it will be seen that each of these factors is a necessary element and a part of the real peace and prosperity of the world, so that the doctrine of universal peace very properly belongs

in the Bahai philosophy and is one of its most important principles. In voicing His cause Baha'o'llah said: "We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer-up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment—that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled. What harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come. Is not this that which Christ foretold? Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. Let not a man glory in this; that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this; that he loves his kind."

Moreover, during Baha'o'llah's imprisonment, in a series of epistles to the kings and rulers of the world, He proclaimed a new day and age of peace to follow these wars and times of trouble. In these days the world is seeing his predictions fulfilled.

THE PARLIAMENT OF NATIONS.

In the writings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha are numerous treatises regarding peace and unity, all of which taken together form the teaching and the attitude of the movement toward this subject, nor is the teaching indirect and vague in the methods it advances for the establishment of harmony between nations. The nations should come together and establish an international court of arbitration, supporting and enforcing its international decisions. Besides military forces in each country sufficient to maintain national order, an international police should be instituted in order to enforce the just decrees of the international court of arbitration, so that if one nation should threaten the peace and tranquillity of the world it could be forced into line with the others without the horrors of a prolonged war. Such measures, together with the strict neutrality of those nations not implicated in the international dispute, and their refusal to send either munitions of war or lend financial aid to belligerent nations, would very shortly do away with the possibility of war from a material standpoint. The constructive teaching of peace principles and true religion is slowly but surely eradicating the war thought from the minds of men.

Speaking of this international tribunal for the judicial settlement of international troubles and disputes Abdul Baha said: "A tribunal which will be under the power of God, and under the protection of all men. Each one must obey the decisions of this tribunal, in order to arrange the difficulties of every nation. About fifty years ago in the Book of Akdas Baha'o'llah commanded the people to establish the universal peace and summoned all the nations to the divine banquet of international arbitration, so that the questions of boundaries, of national honor and property, and of vital interests between nations might be decided by an arbitral court of justice. Remember, these precepts were given more than half a century ago (at that moment no one spoke of universal peace nor of any of these principles) Baha'o'llah proclaimed them to all the sovereigns of the world. They are the spirit of this age; the light of this age; they are the well-being of this age."

PEACE PROTECTION.

While the Bahai Religion teaches peace principles, it also teaches that vicious marauders must be restrained by force, and the weaker and innocent must be protected; nevertheless, the power which will bring about a real and a lasting peace must be a spiritual power which will strike

at and overcome the root or the primal cause of war.

About forty years ago a book was written by one who was under the training of Baha'o'llah, one who then was prominent in the Bahai Cause as a teacher and a philosopher. In this book is found developed some of the Bahai teachings upon world law and order. This work was published under the title of "The Mysterious Forces of Civilization," and is an exposition of Bahai thought and ideals relative to both national and international affairs. Although at the time it was written the attention of the world in general had not been called to arbitration and universal peace, nevertheless, even more than twenty years prior to that date Baha'o'llah was laying the foundation of His religion for world conciliation. The following excerpt from the book in question mentions arbitration backed up by a limited military force as an institution through which war may be eliminated:

"Yea, the true civilization will raise its banner in the center of the world, when some noble kings of high ambitions, the bright suns of the world of humanitarian enthusiasm shall, for the good and happiness of all the human race, step forth with firm resolution and keen strength of mind and hold a conference on the question of universal peace; when, keeping fast hold of the

means of enforcing their views they shall establish a union of the states of the world, and conclude a definite treaty and strict alliance between them upon conditions not to be evaded. When the whole human race shall have been consulted through their representatives and invited to corroborate this treaty, which verily would be a treaty of universal peace and would be accounted sacred by all the peoples of the earth, it would be the duty of the united powers of the world to see that this great treaty should be strengthened and should endure.

“In such a universal treaty the limits of the borders and boundaries of every state should be fixed, as well as the customs and laws of every government. All the agreements and the affairs of state, and the arrangements between the various governments, should be propounded and settled in due form. The size of the armaments for each government should likewise be definitely agreed upon; because, if in the case of any state there were to be an increase in the preparation for war, it would be a cause of alarm to the other states. At any rate, the basis of this powerful alliance should be so fixed that, if one of the states afterwards broke any of the articles of it the rest of the nations of the world would rise up and destroy it. Yea, the whole human race

would band its forces together to exterminate it.

“If so great a remedy should be applied to the sick body of the world, it would certainly be the means of continually and permanently healing its illness by the inculcation of universal moderation. Reflect that, under such conditions of life, no government or kingdom would need to prepare and accumulate war materials, or would need to pay heed to the invention of new weapons of offense for the vexation and hurt of mankind. On the contrary, they would require a few soldiers as a means of assuring the safety of the state and punishing the wicked and rebellious and preventing the growth of civil sedition. Not more than these few would be needed. In the first place, therefore, the servants of God, that is to say, all the inhabitants of a state, would be freed from bearing the burden of the tremendous expense of an army. In the second place, the many persons who now devote their lives to the invention of instruments of war would no longer waste their time upon such work, which but encourages ferocity and blood-thirstiness, and is repugnant to the universal ideal of humanity. On the contrary, they would then employ their natural gifts in the cause of the general well-being, and would contribute towards the peace and salvation of mankind. All the rulers

of the world would then be settled on peaceful thrones amid the glory of a perfect civilization, and all the nations and peoples would rest in the cradle of peace and comfort.

“Some persons who are ignorant of the world of true humanity and its high ambitions for the general good reckon such a glorious condition of life to be very difficult; nay, rather impossible to compass, but it is not so. Far from it, for, by the grace of God, and by the testimony of the Beloved (those near to the threshold of the Creator), and by the incomparably high ambitions of the souls that are perfect, and the thoughts and opinions of the wisest men of the age, there never has been and is not now anything improbable and impossible in existence. What are required are the most resolved determination and the most ardent enthusiasm. How many things, which in ancient times were regarded as impossibilities, of such a kind that the intellect could hardly conceive them, we now perceive to have become quite simple and easy. Why then should this great and important matter of universal peace, which is verily the sun among the lights of civilization, the cause of honor, freedom and salvation to all, be considered as something improbable of realization.

“It is evident that the honor and greatness of man have not arisen through blood-thirstiness,

the destruction of cities and kingdoms, and the ruining and murdering of armies and peoples. On the contrary, the cause of high-mindedness and prosperity is based upon the cherishing of justice and the sympathy with one's fellow citizens, from the highest to the lowest, upon building up the kingdom, the cities and villages, the suburbs and the country, and upon the freedom and quiet of the servants of God in laying down the foundation of the principles of progress, and in the extension of the common weal, and the increase of wealth and general prosperity. Reflect how many world-subduing kings have sat on thrones as conquerors. For example, Halakoo Khan, Ameer Timur, who subjugated the great continent of Asia; Alexander the Macedonian, and Napoleon the First, who stretched the hand of tyranny over three of the five continents of the world. What advantages have resulted from these vast conquests? Was any kingdom established, or was there any gain of happiness? Was any dynasty permanently settled thereby, or did it mean merely the ending of the reign of one particular dynasty? The only result produced by the world-conquering operations of Halakoo and Jenghiz, provoking war on all sides, was that the continent of Asia became like a heap of ashes beneath the blaze of terrible conflagration. The only outcome of the great con-

quest of Alexander the Macedonian, was the fall of his sun from his throne as a ruler, and the passing of his dominions into the hands of Cassander, Seleucus, Ptolemy and Lysimachus. Napoleon the First found no benefit in his victories over the kings of Europe, but he ruined well constituted kingdoms and well cultivated countries. He destroyed hundreds of thousands of men, terrorized and intimidated the whole continent of Europe, and ended his own life in a wretched captivity. Such were the results left behind them by these kings and their huge conquests."

CO-OPERATION.

The Bahais hold that co-operation is the basic principle upon which all institutions should be founded, the co-operation of all for the good of all. Laws should be so regulated that it will be impossible for one man to enrich himself at the expense or oppression of another. Through the proper adjustment of political and commercial relations between individuals and nations all will live in harmony, happiness and in plenty.

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

Regarding the economic question, Abdul Baha says: "No religious books of the past prophets speak of the economic question, while the eco-

conomic problem has been thoroughly solved in the teachings of Baha'o'llah. Certain regulations are revealed which insure the welfare and well being of all humanity. Just as the rich man enjoys his rest and his pleasures surrounded by luxuries, so the poor man must likewise have a home, be provided with sustenance, and not be in want. Until this is effected happiness is impossible. All are equal in the estimation of God; their rights are one and there is no distinction for any soul; all are protected beneath the justice of God."

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE.

Linguistic differences between peoples and nations have not been conducive to understanding and mutual appreciation. In order to increase the means of the inter-communication of thought and humanitarian ideals between peoples of different languages, the Bahais teach "that a universal language shall be adopted which shall be taught by all the schools and academies of the world. A committee appointed by national bodies shall select a suitable language to be used as a means of international communication, and that language shall be taught in all the schools of the world in order that every one shall need but two languages, his national tongue and the universal language. All

will acquire the international language." The Bahais believe that the adoption of a universal language would be one of the various means for the furthering of the universal Bahai ideals, creating a better understanding between all peoples.

THE MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR.

In the Bahai Cause there is no priesthood nor clergy. Each soul approaches God in prayer without sacred rite or ceremony. Temples open to all people of all religions are to be provided for reading, meditation and prayer. These are to be surrounded by hospices, hospitals, asylums, schools, universities, etc., the whole group of buildings to be known as a "Mashrak-el-Azkar," which literally means "The dawning point of the mentionings of God." In these institutions is symbolized both the spiritual worship and the humanitarian service as taught by Baha'o'llah. Not long since in the city of Eshkhabad, in Russian Turkistan, a Mashrak-el-Azkar was built. At present the Bahais throughout the world are uniting in the building of the first Mashrak-el-Azkar in America, to be erected near the city of Chicago, upon the shore of Lake Michigan, where a considerable site has been acquired. It is anticipated that the work of building will soon begin.

THE METHOD OF TEACHING.

The Bahai teaching is given without money and without price. Teachers are self-supporting, giving their time and services, save in rare instances where people of means have been known to furnish living and traveling expenses for certain teachers while they were on missions of teaching. The recompense for teaching is the joy and satisfaction of serving in the cause of truth. The teaching consists of first living the principles of the cause in one's inner life and then speaking of them to others. All believers are teachers, each in his or her own sphere. The Bahais in no way form a close sect or cult. They do not separate themselves from other people. Their work is outward and in the world where they are seeking to diffuse spiritual knowledge and serve humanity.

INSTRUCTIONS.

In the teachings of Baha'o'llah He ordered certain changes in the manners and customs of people, through the observance of which the world in general will be helped both materially and spiritually. He advises the Bahais to be tolerant, and in no way to separate themselves from other people, nor denounce those of other beliefs. All men are free to believe as they wish, all are exhorted to unite in faith and lay aside the prejudices and superstitions of past ages. Leg-

isolation should be representative. The Bahais should be peaceful and law abiding citizens. Their thought should be humanitarian above all else. Faith without works is not acceptable. One's worship should be supplemented by a pure and useful life in the world. People should marry. Asceticism is discouraged. Monogamy is taught. Harshness and hatred are to be overcome by gentleness and love. Man should not use intoxicants as a beverage. Opium and kindred drug habits are denounced, as is also gambling. Baha'o'llah forbade mendicity, slavery, cruelty to animals, and many other abuses which our western civilization has already remedied, so it is hardly necessary to mention them here. The following of these ordinances is already producing its good effect in the many Bahai centers throughout the world and good fruits are coming therefrom. The business affairs of the Bahai Movement are conducted by assemblies of consultation. Eventually there will be a general assembly of consultation composed of representatives for all parts of the world. This will be known as "The Universal House of Justice."

RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS.

True religion, morality, and the accompanying high ideals have always gone hand in hand

with human uplift and progress; and conversely, in times when irreligion and immorality have prevailed, with the inevitable lowering of all ideals, nations have retrograded and civilization has fallen and decayed, and the people have been in manifest loss. This principle can be seen working in the world of today in the rise and fall of governments, nations and peoples. The following words quoted from a recent interview with Abdul Baha express his teaching upon this subject:

"This war has lasted very long, but it had to come. The corrupt world needed such a purification. The war was not an act of God, but rather the results of the accumulation of our own evil deeds. Because peoples and nations did not act in accordance with justice, and tyrannized innocent men, this war had to sweep away all remnants of autocracy, absolutism and militarism, and usher in an era of democracy, equality before the law, and international peace."

As one studies deeply into the spirit and philosophy of the Bahai Religion, one is impressed with its similarity to the principles of the teachings of Christ. Christ advocated peace, but during these nineteen centuries there has been no peace between men because that spirit of peace has not become a reality between nations; yet we are told that the stone which was rejected by

the builders would become the chief cornerstone of the temple. Many isolated experiences of individuals prove that the Christ philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount can be applied with success in one's individual relations with others, but until now the nations have rejected the actual practice of this philosophy as being unsuited to their methods of solving their international problems. But now in the exposition of the working philosophy of the Bahais one finds a safe and an adequate connection between the spiritual ideals of religion and material world conditions, which offers a practical solution for the peace of nations, and one quite possible of an early attainment if the nations are able to carry out these high ideals and principles, bringing them out from the realm of the ideal to be realized in the world of reality.

THE HOPE OF THE NATIONS.

While the mere cessation of open hostilities on the fields of battle in Europe has marked one great epoch of peace, the world has not yet attained to the real foundation of a lasting peace. This lasting world peace cannot come until international, economic and social justice is established, and not before the psychological causes of greed, desire for national aggrandizement at the expense of other nations, hatred and animos-

ity are wiped out between the different classes, nations, races and religions. Suffering humanity will surely look with sympathy and with a broadness and a far-seeing vision upon a religious teaching which is diffusing through the world such a constructive philosophy for the reconstruction of society as one finds being promulgated by the followers of this movement.

GROWTH OF THE BAHAI RELIGION.

The movement under The Bab was confined to Persia and the adjacent countries. During the ministry of Baha'o'llah, the message was taken to various other countries of the Orient and now has spread the world around. There are not only centers of Bahai teaching in China, Japan, Burma, India, Persia, Turkistan, Caucasasia, the Turkish countries and in Egypt, but there are Bahai centers in France, Germany, England, and throughout the United States and Canada. This growth has been a comparatively slow but steady one. It is not limited by religious or racial conditions, which is proven by the many heterogeneous elements which this cause is assimilating and fusing into one element. which is the world type of man.

The universal principles of truth which the Bahai Movement is teaching are already clearly seen in the way in which this teaching appeals

to people of all religions, races, and nationalities. The moment that an individual becomes touched by the Bahai spirit he becomes a citizen of the world, quite freed from the limitations of his former outlook or environment, while his former social and religious prejudices are changed into a desire to do something toward forming a world brotherhood through tangible service to his fellow men. In the Bahai meetings—notably those in the Orient—one sees Christians, Jews, Moslems, Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists mingling as brothers and eating at the same tables. It has been the writer's privilege to travel extensively and to attend many such reunions. He has spent much time in the Oriental countries and has seen the spiritual blending of the Orient and Occident, which process is being brought about by the love and devotion of the Bahais one for another. These people are really demonstrating the power of divine love, for with them it is so powerful as to overcome all religious and racial antipathy and is producing real brotherhood and peace.

Already the Bahai ideals are finding a warm welcome among the more progressive Moslems in various parts of the Oriental world as well as among the Hindus and Zoroastrians in India, the Buddhists in Burma and Japan, and the Jews and Christians in various parts of the Orient and Oc-

cident. The Bahai teaching does not come to the people of these divers religions to destroy their faith in the truths of their prophets. Instead this movement seeks to confirm them in the true principles of the religion which they already hold, while the universal application of these principles of religion as taught by the Bahais come a uniting power to draw all of these different religious elements into one great harmonious whole. The several testimonies of Oriental travelers who have contracted with the Bahais in those lands assure us that the movement is embracing a multitude of heterogeneous religious elements, and that through it already many Christians, Jews, Moslems, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Hindus are united in that spirit of universal religious brotherhood which has been the hope of the prophets and religious seers down through the ages.



AN EXHORTATION BY ABDUL BAHA.

“O People! The doors of the Kingdom are opened—the Sun of Truth is shining upon the world—the fountains of life are flowing—the daysprings of mercy have appeared—the greatest and most glorious light is now manifest to illuminate the hearts of men. Wake up and hear the voice of God calling from all parts of the supreme world—‘Come unto me, O ye children of men; come unto me, O ye who are thirsty, and drink from this sweet water which is descending in torrents upon all parts of the globe!’

Now is the time! Now is the accepted time!

Look ye at the time of Christ; had the people realized that the Holy Spirit of God was speaking to them through His Divine mouth they would not have waited three centuries before accepting Him. And now is it meet for you that ye are sleeping upon the beds of idleness and neglect, while the Father foretold by Christ has come amongst us and opened the greatest door of bounteous gifts and divine favors? Let us not be like those in past centuries who were deaf to His call and blind to His beauty; but let us try and open our eyes that we may see him, and open our ears that we may hear Him, and cleanse our hearts that He may come and abide in our temples.

These days are the days of faith and deeds—not the days of words and lip service. Let us arise from the sleep of negligence and realize what a great feast is prepared for us, first eating thereof ourselves, then giving unto others who are thirsting for the water of knowledge and hungering for the bread of life.

These great days are swiftly passing and once gone can never be recalled; so while the rays of the Sun of Truth are still shining, and The Center of The Covenant of God is manifest, let us go forth to work, for after a while the night will come and the way to the vineyard will not then be as easy to find.

The light of knowledge hath appeared, before which the darkness of every superstitious fancy will be annihilated. The hosts of the supreme concourse are descending to assist all those who rise up to serve their Lord, to subdue and gain the victory over the city of the hearts, to proclaim the glad tidings of the coming of the Lord, and to unite the souls of His creatures.”

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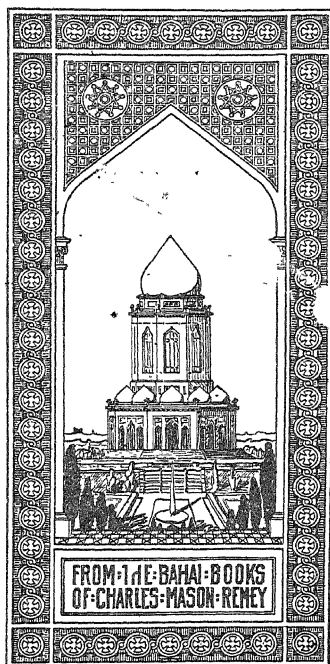
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